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BILINGUAL EDUCATION IN NEVADA.

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PROGRAMS OF BILINGUAL EDUCATION, SUPPORTED BY FEDERAL GRANTS, ARE PRESENTLY ATTEMPTING TO ALLEVIATE LANGUAGE AND CULTURAL EXPERIENCE DEPRIVATION IN THE MINORITY ETHNIC GROUPS OF NEVADA, INCLUDING MIGRANTS, INDIANS, AND IMMIGRANTS FROM CUBA, MEXICO, AND PUERTO RICO. MOST OF THESE FAMILIES ARE ECONOMICALLY DEPRIVED AND LACK AMERICAN CULTURAL EXPERIENCE. JOINT PARENT AND CHILD SESSIONS ARE CONDUCTED WITH DEMONSTRATIONS OF FINE ARTS, FILM DOCUMENTARIES, ORGANIZED RECREATIONAL ACTIVITIES, AND GROUP COUNSELING. NO EVALUATION OF THE PROGRAMS IS AVAILABLE AT THIS TIME. THIS REPORT WAS DELIVERED AT THE ANNUAL CONFERENCE OF THE SOUTHWEST COUNCIL OF FOREIGN LANGUAGE TEACHERS, EL PASO, TEXAS, NOVEMBER 10-11, 1967. (WN)

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Bilingual Education in Nevada

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There are two areas of concern for the education of the bilingual in Nevada.

The first is for the student who is deprived of language and cultural experience. Included in this area are the agricultural migrant and many of the Indian students living on reservations. The second area of concern is for the non-speaker of English, who has immigrated to the United States, perhaps as a refugee, agricultural worker, student, etc.

LANGUAGE AND CULTURAL EXPERIENCE DEPRIVATION

Language deprivation is defined here as a small active vocabulary and an almost non-existing passive vocabulary in both languages. This vocabulary deficiency is directly related to the cultural experiences both abstract and real that the student has had. A number of illustrations are here given as casual effects.

Many families, both migrant and Indian, are under an economic burden to provide for their families as a result of receiving less than an adequate wage. Consequently, enrichment opportunities, such as vacations, visits to museums, parks, theaters, concerts, hunting and fishing trips, excursions to factories, etc. are financially improbable. Other experiences such as swimming, skiing, golfing, archery, bowling, etc. are rarely part of the student's background. As a result, expressions concerning these activities are seldom found in the vocabulary of the student.

Another casual effect is the lack of experience on the part of the parents in many of the aforementioned activities. They obviously then cannot interact with their children concerning those things of which they are unacquainted.

Housing and studying facilities are often inadequate. There exists a lack of space, a family of four or more cramped into one or two rooms. Lighting is often a kerosene lantern; no tables, pencils, or books, are to be found. This reduces the changes for language experience, both real and abstract, in the home environment.

One more determining factor is that often when the student reaches the age of fourteen or fifteen he is considered by the parents to be an economic liability when in school, and an economic asset when employed. Additional schooling, thus, is denied.

In order to provide opportunities for these students, a number of projects have been initiated in Nevada under grants for the educationally deprived, TITLE I ESEA, and under provisions of the Johnson-O'Malley Act.

Moapa Valley Migrant Student Project is an effort to coordinate all agencies, federal, state, and local, and other interests concerned with

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the agricultural migrants who harvest the winter crops in Moapa Valley, east of Las Vegas. Plans have been made to attack the problems referred to in the previous paragraphs through education of the whole family, and by providing more real and personal service in the areas of employment, welfare, housing, etc. This project has just been initiated, so no data is available. Approximate number of people involved, 400.

Evening Educational Multipurpose Center for Students is an example of several TITLE I ESEA projects for the purpose of providing facilities and materials upon which to expand and develop language experiences. Activities which are provided in the Center include: Individual and small group instruction for youngsters experiencing difficulty in subject matter areas; a study center for students, with access to the materials center; individual and group counseling for students and parents; special programs in music and art; organized recreational activities; and, every other week, motion pictures (documentaries, travelogues, drama, etc.) are shown to parents and students.

The basic assumption is that experience deprivation is the greatest contribution to poor achievement, rather than an inability to communicate in English per se.

NON-SPEAKERS OF ENGLISH

The majority of these families are immigrants or refugees from Mexico, Cuba, or Puerto Rico. They are employed, principally, in tourist oriented industries, such as: hotels, restaurants, casinos, motels, etc., located in the major cities of Nevada. Their language facility in Spanish is usually quite good and most have had adequate cultural experience on which to base an expanded vocabulary in their native language. The primary concern, then, is to teach English as a second language.

Several projects are contemplated in the Las Vegas area for fiscal year 1967-68 to develop the English skills of students having this handicap.

Some 200 students have been identified as non-speakers of English in about five elementary schools and the number appears to be increasing. The students will be assisted within the regular classroom, as a result of in-service training with the regular classroom teacher. Language specialists will provide services for diagnostic purposes and to assist teachers. Audio-visual aids will be purchased under TITLE II ESEA.

Nevada is at its Genesis as concerns programs dealing with the education of the bilingual; however, many of its problems are unique to the state. The efforts of teachers, administrators, and others in these projects should produce educational worth to all educators.